

What is claimed is:

1. A communication device comprising a letter string editing unit, a decide input reception unit, a sending unit, a reception unit, a display image generation unit, and a display unit, wherein:

5 said letter string editing unit receives an edit instruction for editing a letter string from a user and edits a letter string in accordance with the received edit instruction;

said decide input reception unit receives a decide instruction from the user together with an operation strength of the user for inputting the decide instruction;

10 in a case where the decide input is received, said sending unit sends a sender side message specifying the edited letter string and strength information associated with the operation strength, to another communication device which is communicably connected to said communication device;

said reception unit receives a receiver side message specifying a letter string to be displayed and strength information, from another communication device communicably
15 connected to said communication device;

said display image generation unit generates a display image by depicting the letter string specified in the receiver side message, in accordance with a format which is pre-associated with the strength information specified in the receiver side message; and

said display unit displays the generated display image.

20 2. A communication device comprising a letter string editing unit, a decide input reception unit, a sending unit, a reception unit, a display image generation unit, and a display unit, wherein:

said letter string editing unit receives an edit instruction for editing a letter string from a user together with an operation strength of the user for inputting the edit
25 instruction, and edits a letter string in accordance with the edit instruction;

said decide input reception unit receives a decide instruction from the user;

in a case where the decide instruction is received, said sending unit sends a sender

side message specifying the edited letter string and strength information associated with the operation strength, to another communication device which is communicably connected to said communication device;

said reception unit receives a receiver side message specifying a letter string to be
5 displayed and strength information from another communication device communicably connected to said communication device;

said display image generation unit displays a display image by depicting the letter string specified in the receiver side message, in accordance with a format which is pre-associated with the strength information specified in the receiver side message; and
10 said display unit displays the generated display image.

3. The communication device according to claim 1, further comprising a font acquiring unit, wherein:

said font acquiring unit acquires font information designating a font having a size which is pre-associated with the strength information specified in the receiver side
15 message; and

said display image generation unit generates the display image by depicting the letter string specified in the receiver side message in accordance with the acquired font information.

4. The communication device according to claim 1, further comprising a
20 background image acquiring unit, wherein:

said background image acquiring unit acquires background image information which is pre-associated with the strength information specified in the receiver side message; and

said display image generation unit displays the display image by depicting the letter
25 string specified in the receiver side message in accordance with the acquired font information, and by overlaying the letter string on the acquired background image information.

5. The communication device according to claim 1, further comprising a display time acquiring unit, wherein:

said display time acquiring unit acquires a display time which is pre-associated with the strength information specified in the receiver side message; and

5 said display unit finishes display of the generated display image, when the acquired display time passes after display of the display image is started.

6. The communication device according to claim 1, further comprising a display position candidate acquiring unit and a display position selection unit, wherein:

said sending unit sends the sender side message in which a user identifier assigned
10 to the user is further specified;

a user identifier is further specified in the receiver side message received by said reception unit;

said display position candidate acquiring unit acquires a plurality of display position candidates which are associated with the user identifier specified in the received receiver
15 side message;

said display position selection unit provisionally displays the display image corresponding to the user identifier specified in the receiver side message, at the respective acquired display position candidates, in order to calculate an overlap area which is occupied together by any already-displayed display image corresponding to a
20 user identifier other than the specified user identifier and by the provisionally-displayed display image at the respective acquired display position candidates, and selects one display position candidate at which the overlap area becomes the smallest of all the overlap areas calculated for the respective acquired display position candidates; and

said display unit displays the display image corresponding to the specified user
25 identifier at the selected display position candidate.

7. The communication device according to claim 1, further comprising a display position candidate acquiring unit and a display position selection unit, wherein:

said sending unit sends the sender side message in which a user identifier assigned to the user is further specified;

a user identifier is further specified in the receiver side message received by said reception unit;

5 said display position candidate acquiring unit acquires a plurality of display position candidates which are associated with the user identifier specified in the receiver side message and which are positions in a virtual three-dimensional space;

said display position selection unit calculates “a smallest value of an angle formed by a vector extending from a predetermined viewpoint to each of the plurality of acquired
10 display position candidates in the virtual three-dimensional space, and by a vector extending from the predetermined viewpoint to a position in the virtual three-dimensional space of any already-displayed display image corresponding to a user identifier other than the user identifier specified in the receiver side message”, and selects one display position candidate whose calculated smallest value is the largest of all the calculated smallest
15 values; and

said display unit displays a rendered image of the display image corresponding to the specified user identifier, which is arranged at the selected display position candidate in the virtual three-dimensional space, and which is seen from the predetermined viewpoint.

20 8. The communication device according to claim 7, wherein

in a case where a size when seen from the predetermined viewpoint, of the display image corresponding to the specified user identifier which is arranged at the selected display position candidate in the virtual three-dimensional space, is smaller than a predetermined smallest size, the display unit expands the display image to have a size
25 equal to or larger than the predetermined smallest size.

9. The communication device according to any one of claims 6, further comprising a character image position acquiring unit, wherein:

said character image position acquiring unit acquires a character image and a character display position which are associated with the user identifier specified in the receiver side message;

said display position candidate acquiring unit refers to each of a plurality of pairs of
 5 directions and distances, and acquires as a display position candidate, a position which is apart from the acquired character display position in a direction in a pair, by a distance in the same pair; and

said display unit further displays the acquired character image at the acquired character display position.

10 10. A program for controlling a computer (including a game console which is communicably connected to another game console via a computer communication network) to function as the letter string editing unit, the decide input reception unit, the sending unit, the reception unit, the display image generation unit, and the display unit which are comprised in the communication device according to claim 1 or 2.

15 11. A communication method comprising a letter string editing step, a decide input receiving step, a sending step, a receiving step, a font acquiring step, a display image generating step, and a displaying step, wherein:

said letter string editing step receives an edit instruction for editing a letter string from a user and edits a letter string in accordance with the edit instruction;

20 said decide input receiving step receives a decide instruction from the user together with an operation strength of the user for inputting the decide instruction;

in a case where the decide instruction is received, said sending step sends a sender side message specifying the edited letter string and strength information associated with the operation strength, to another communication device;

25 said receiving step receives a receiver side message specifying a letter string to be displayed and strength information from another communication device;

said font acquiring step acquires font information designating a font having a size

which is pre-associated with the strength information specified in the receiver side message;

said display image generating step generates a display image by depicting the letter string specified in the receiver side message in accordance with the acquired font

5 information; and

said displaying step displays the generated display image.

12. A communication method comprising a letter string editing step, a decide input receiving step, a sending step, a receiving step, a font acquiring step, a display image generating step, and a displaying step, wherein:

10 said letter string editing step receives an edit instruction for editing a letter string from a user together with an operation strength of the user for inputting the editing instruction, and edits a letter string in accordance with the edit instruction;

said decide input receiving step receives a decide instruction from the user;

in a case where the decide instruction is received, said sending step sends a sender
15 side message specifying the edited letter string and strength information associated with the operation strength to another communication device;

said receiving step receives a receiver side message specifying a letter string to be displayed and strength information from another communication device;

said font acquiring step acquires font information designating a font having a size
20 which is pre-associated with the strength information specified in the receiver side message;

said display image generating step generates a display image by depicting the letter string specified in the receiver side message in accordance with the acquired font information; and

25 said displaying image displays the generated display image.

13. A computer usable medium having a computer program for controlling a computer to function as a letter string editing unit, a decide input reception unit, a sending

unit, a reception unit, a display image generation unit, and a display unit, wherein:

said letter string editing unit receives an edit instruction for editing a letter string from a user and edits a letter string in accordance with the received edit instruction;

said decide input reception unit receives a decide instruction from the user together
5 with an operation strength of the user for inputting the decide instruction;

in a case where the decide input is received, said sending unit sends a sender side message specifying the edited letter string and strength information associated with the operation strength, to another communication device which is communicably connected to said communication device;

10 said reception unit receives a receiver side message specifying a letter string to be displayed and strength information, from another communication device communicably connected to said communication device;

said display image generation unit generates a display image by depicting the letter string specified in the receiver side message, in accordance with a format which is
15 pre-associated with the strength information specified in the receiver side message; and
said display unit displays the generated display image.

14. A computer usable medium having a computer program for controlling a computer to function as a letter string editing unit, a decide input reception unit, a sending unit, a reception unit, a display image generation unit, and a display unit, wherein:

20 said letter string editing unit receives an edit instruction for editing a letter string from a user together with an operation strength of the user for inputting the edit instruction, and edits a letter string in accordance with the edit instruction;

said decide input reception unit receives a decide instruction from the user;

in a case where the decide instruction is received, said sending unit sends a sender
25 side message specifying the edited letter string and strength information associated with the operation strength, to another communication device which is communicably connected to said communication device;

said reception unit receives a receiver side message specifying a letter string to be displayed and strength information from another communication device communicably connected to said communication device;

said display image generation unit displays a display image by depicting the letter
5 string specified in the receiver side message, in accordance with a format which is
pre-associated with the strength information specified in the receiver side message; and
said display unit displays the generated display image.